Central Vermont Railroad, Locomotive Shop
Lake Street
St. Albans
Franklin County
Vermont

HAER No. VT-12

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

CENTRAL VERMONT RAILROAD, LOCOMOTIVE SHOP
HAER VT-12

Location:	Bounded on the north and east by Central Vermont Railway tracks, on the south by Lake Street, and on the west by Pine Street, St. Albans, Franklin County, Vermont.
Date of Construction:	Between 1863 and 1865.
Present Owner:	Central Vermont Railway Inc., corner of Lake and Federal Streets, St. Albans, Vermont.
Present Use:	Demolished, 1979.
Significance:	The locomotive shop originally served as the repair and fabrication facility for the State's main rail carrier, Central Vermont Railway, which provided the first all-weather service from Boston to Montreal.

The Locomotive Shop was constructed as part of the Central Vermont Railway's headquarters in St. Albans, Vermont. At the height of its activity, as many as 50 trains a day were dispatched from the complex, making it one of the busiest freight operations east of Chicago. In addition to the passenger and freight services associated with a train yard, the railraod maintained facilities for the entire process of car production, as well as bridge construction and roadway repair. In the locomotive shop, six new engines a year and one and one-half freight cars a day could be produced. In later years, the shop was used primarily for rolling stock repairs, and other railroad purposes. Finally, it was leased as storage space.

Structurally, the building was in fairly good shape except for the rear section, which was partially collapsed. Physical evidence suggested that the northern appendages were later additions. The overhead doors in the main (south) facade were replacements, probably for rounded-arch engine passages.

This rectangular building consisted of four elements, including a front single-story masonry building approximately 58' x 200' in plan with a two-story tower on the southeast corner (old boiler shop). Immediately behind, and attached to this building, was another single-story industrial building of similar construction (old machine shop). This building had wood sheds attached to either side and was approximately 78' x 200' in plan. The width was extended 20' x 25' by wood sheds framed on each side. Along the east side of the front building was a wood-framed shed approximately 45' x 55' in plan (tool room). Along the west side of the main building were attached buildings housing toilets, mechanical rooms and the boiler room.

The low foundation was made of cut stone. The heavy brick exterior walls were richly corbelled and ornamented at the eaves. There were a series of brick pilasters along the east and west elevations which tapered in depth from 32" at the base to 20" at the eave line. These 2' wide brick pilasters were 8'10" on center and supported the roof trusses, which spanned 58' across the building. Between the pilasters there was a 16"-thick infill brick wall with arched openings over the windows. At the northwest corner adjacent to the boiler room, a series of openings for pipes had been cut through the wall directly under a truss bearing. This portion of the wall had failed and the truss directly above had settled approximately 1'. In the front of the building, on Lake Street, the masonry wall had partially collapsed to the east of the front door. There was also evidence of water penetrating the wall at the same location. Also, there were a number of cracks on all faces of the masonry in the two-story masonry tower at the southeast corner. A portion of the face veneer of brick on the east elevation of the tower at the first floor had separated from the backup wall. On the front of the building, the western edge of the ornamental step parapet had been damaged by water where the cap flashing failed. There was also minor distress where openings had been closed up or cut in the walls to form doorways or windows over the years. The walls were constructed with lime mortar. The structural system was of load-bearing brick.

The masonry exterior was pierced regularly with 12-over-12 double-hung windows which were approximately 5' x 10'. The windows were flanked by brick buttresses, forming pronounced bay divisions. The pitched roof had a clerestory monitor which ran almost the entire length of the building. The roofing material had decayed to simply consist of several layers of rolled roofing and metal.

The interior building area was approximately 10,368 square feet. There were no interior columns. The floor was a concrete slab on grade with railroad tracks in it.

The main facade of the building faced south, opening onto Lake Street. It was part of the headquarters of the Central Vermont Railway, which was built between 1863 and 1923, and part of a National Register historic district containing passenger facilities, freight stations, and offices on 51 acres.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Primary:

Anderson, J. Timothy, Anderson, Notter, Finegold, Inc. Letter to William B. Pinney, Director, Agency of Development and Community Affairs, Division for Historic Preservation, State of Vermont, 23 October 1978.

Brown, Arthur L., Jr., Brown, Rona Inc. Consulting Engineers. Letter to Eric Gilbertson, Assistant Director, Division for Historic Preservation, State of Vermont, 4 October 1978.

Field measurements done May 1-2, 1979.

Secondary:

Central Vermont Railroad Headquarters, National Register of Historic Places nomination. 21 January 1974.

PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken as a cooperative venture by the Historic American Engineering Record, the State of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, and the Historic Preservation Program of the University of Vermont. Field recording was led by Richard Anderson and Donald Stevenson of the Washington, D.C. office of HAER. University of Vermont students involved were Francis Brawley, Douglas Dunn, Arthur Gerrier, Peter Hawley, Philip Marshall, Donald Theurer, Emily Wadham Webb, and David Webster. The field recording was done May 1-2, 1979.

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